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Mexico [REDACTED]

Two unprovoked political killings in Mexico City

[REDACTED] The groups claiming responsibility for the murders were involved in an armed struggle against the government almost 20 years ago.

Two small leftist groups—the Clandestine Revolutionary Workers Party-Union of the People (PROCUP) and the Party of the Poor (PDLP)—claimed responsibility for the shooting deaths of two unarmed security guards in the offices of a Mexico City newspaper earlier this month. According to press reports, the guards were shot after they refused to accept subversive propaganda that members of the groups wanted published in the newspaper.

[REDACTED] the PDLP also has threatened to kill the governor of Guerrero and other state officials unless they order the release of recently arrested militants of the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD)—Mexico's principal leftist opposition party.

Both PROCUP and PDLP have roots in rural Guerrero, where they sponsored an armed struggle to overthrow the government in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The groups, then under the leadership of Communist revolutionaries, conducted guerrilla operations in the mountains of Guerrero for a decade before a government crackdown and offers of amnesty curtailed their activities. During the height of the insurgency, PROCUP and the PDLP maintained the loyalty of local peasants by handing out money obtained in a series of spectacular kidnappings—including the governor of Guerrero—and bank robberies. Although the two groups have operated clandestinely since then, their

membership withered and they generally refrained from terrorist and criminal tactics, according to press reports

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Recent political turmoil surrounding disputed municipal elections in Guerrero and neighboring Michoacán state apparently has emboldened the radicals. Militants of the PRD occupied about half of the town halls in those states last December and threatened violence if authorities tried to remove them. According to press reports, most of the protesters were armed with machetes and rifles, and some had sophisticated automatic weapons. The confrontational atmosphere may have encouraged radicals from PROCUP and the PDLP to take up the PRD's cause; any resulting violence then could be used to foment further unrest in the countryside. We believe the PDLP's demand for the

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release of the arrested PRD activists probably is an attempt to lend popular legitimacy to the organization

~~_____~~ the PRD denies formal links with PROCUP and the PDLP, according to press reports ~~_____~~

